

A HISTORY OF HOBBY PRINTING IN AUSTRALASIA

HOBBY PRINTING means using printing machinery for communication with like-minded people, or occasionally merely to practise typography. It can be solitary, but since 1876 various groups have formed to help beginners and organise exchanges, mostly with a central 'mailer' sending members a monthly 'bundle' of items posted in by active, talented hobbyists. Such groups can accommodate all sorts of writers, editors, collectors and printing methods — the activity has become known as 'a.j.' (amateur journalism). A reliable postal system (1860), small cheap hand-platen presses (1870), typewriters (1880), and duplicators ten years later, made the hobby seem in the forefront of progress.

In 1892 George Billheimer, secretary of the Golden Hours Corresponding Club of America, urged Will Coxhead of Sydney to start an Australian branch. This became a reality in a few weeks, with hand-written-and-illustrated journals: *Kangaroo* in Sydney from 1 June, and *Victorian Kangaroo* from Melbourne a week later. Such 'pass-arounds' have been invented by many families, with forwarding addresses, originator last, hoping to get his journal back with comments on blank sheets left for these. Round¹ says "the bug-bear of the MS journal was the lazy amateur who failed to send these journals on promptly. Many a journal was lost . . . it could only be suspected . . . due to wilful suppression on some receiver's part." The oldest known Australian magazine of this kind was *Marroon Magazine*, 1860. Although not hobby printing, I append a list of all MS journals and publishers known.

The Golden Hours members were young and soon moved into the new hectograph and mimeo duplicating methods, to be eclipsed promptly in May 1893 by the first a.j. letterpress journal in Australia (and the Southern Hemisphere?).² This was *Kangaroo 12* and Coxhead states: "Mr J.E. Jordan and myself, after purchasing a small fount of brevier, issued a little printed journal of 12 pages . . . it was a beginning . . . it was printed entirely without machinery . . . our method was to 'set-up' direct onto a small wooden galley and after making it secure to run a home-made roller over it with ink, then lay our dampened sheet on the type, carefully, after which it was pressed by muscular effort with a small block of wood covered with felt."³ Brevier was small type, about 8-point, and to print 15 issues in 30 months, 100 copies and up to 20 pages, was an heroic effort.

Herbert Round and Hal Stone, both printing tradesmen of Melbourne, began letterpress editions of *Victorian Kangaroo* in March 1894 and carried the series on till 1905, with F. Cousins replacing Round and being sole editor of later issues while Hal was in America; there was a name change to *Ye Kangaroo* in 1901. This is an example of the uncertainty of records, and the importance of finding some way of making material in the great Hadley Smith Collection accessible: Round⁴ says 32 issues printed; Barr⁵ 37 *Victorian Kangaroo*, 18 *Ye Kangaroo*; Horton and Leon Stone⁶ 6 MS, 34 *Victorian Kangaroo*, 19 *Ye Kangaroo*; Leon Stone⁷ 12 MS to April 1894, 42 printed to October 1905.

Rise of the Amateur Press Association

During 1894 some Sydney members formed an 'Australian Amateur Journalists Association' and graciously allocated two of eight executive posts to Victorian GHCC members; as there were fewer members in Sydney and the Melbourne group had not been consulted, a bitter quarrel dragged on for years, fuelled by snide comment in *Emu* and *Victorian Kangaroo*. Support and activity faded at the Sydney end, and Victoria formed the 'Australian Society of Amateur Journalists' in 1896, with Round printing *Austral Amateur* every two months — this also served the Golden Hours, who had gone along quietly while the printers squabbled. Reconciliation in 1898 produced the AAPA with Round as President and *Austral Amateur* appearing monthly; activity boomed and membership rose to over 300, with annual conventions in Sydney, Tasmania, Melbourne and finally Sydney, Christmas, 1905. Round's work on 104 of the 109 *Austral Amateur* issues should be emblazoned in the a.j. Hall of Fame. Early issues were handset, taking about 50 hours; later he was allowed use of a linotype at work. He had to carry formes (12 to 16 pages, about 5 kg each) six miles on a bicycle; then more miles to a press (mostly he lacked one); then back to work!

Credit for those bustling years belongs to Hill, who was an efficient President for three peak years, Round and Stone, Coxhead and Jordan. When Hill stood down and Round stopped work on the journal the whole movement fell apart.

There was a.j. activity in New Zealand, and a Christchurch branch of AAPA 1903-4, run by E.A. Laery, who had previously produced the hectographed *Budding Scribe*. The only printed journal recorded is *Comrades*, and we have not located any specimens from this period.

Leon Stone revives AAPA, 1923-29

In 1908 Round reported a complete absence of printed journals, and only one pass-around, in all Australia. Leon Stone reported that only eight journals were printed 1907 to 1922, but I list 12. Leon, aged 16, started publishing *Kooraka* and urging others to become active; response was slight despite Leon's *Moon*, *Australian Amateur* and a few journals by others. Hal printed *Silver Wattle* and apparently he did most (if not all) of Leon's typesetting and printing.

The Golden Hours gradually changed into the 'A. & N.Z. Amateur Press Association' which organises exchanges of duplicated science fiction journals; limit of 30 members, strict activity requirement and a waiting list; most members are now Americans (GHCC has come home!).

In New Zealand R.G. Barr published *Snapshot* and *Silver Fern*, building up links (and collection rivalry) with Leon; and *Kiwi*, *Kiwi News*, *Amateur Ink*, *Livewire* and *Spindrift* appeared from members of the 'N.Z. Amateur Arts & Literary Association' before it died in 1930.

Finally, Hal tried a post-war revival, printing 9 issues of Leon's high-class *Koolinda* and then his own *Coo-ee* (with lists of 'AAPA officers', who had not been consulted). AAPA did not respond, although Leon's friend Jim Guinane continued his excellent *Churinga* until 1955.

Association of Handcraft Printers (N.Z.)

The last twenty years have seen a resurgence and transformation. The 'offset revolution' has made cast-off letterpress equipment, presses and type available at reasonable rates, and older people have drifted into the hobby by chance combinations of having space at home, spare time, and friends or occupation providing contact with printing. Most start with a small hand-platen, but keen hobbyists usually graduate to a larger treadle or motor-driven platen and a considerable collection of type.

In 1973 Walter Lemm of Auckland advertised in our main papers for hobby printers interested in forming a New Zealand group; several people answered and were able to supply names of others, and Walter sent out an information sheet titled "Vinculum 1973". We thought 20 members from the whole country was the most we could expect, but when I held the first meeting 16 people turned up just from Wellington! The name 'Association of Handcraft Printers' was chosen, and the title "Vinculum" assigned to a co-operative journal of our own invention — members would print 80 copies (later increased to 100) of an A5 sheet, post them to me for collation and binding, and I would mail out a copy to each member plus extras to contributors. "Vinculum" has appeared regularly each June and December, averaging 25 sheets, and now at Vol. 13 is the second-longest-running such journal in the world (and the only one from the Southern Hemisphere).

AHP membership has grown steadily to over 60 (including four in Australia and one in Japan) and we have a quarterly Newsletter and local meetings. We have been able to find equipment for members, and help each other learn the black art; several members have also joined hobby associations in Britain and America. Our main problem is persuading someone to be the President (we have never yet needed an election).

Similar groups overseas depend mainly on a monthly 'bundle'. This works well when there are several hundred members, but we can only rise to a quarterly bundle at present. We had hoped to find a large number of hobby printers in Australia and form a larger association, but comparative lack of interest there, and soaring mail costs, make this development unlikely.

Australia did have Leon Stone's "Australian Library of Amateur Journalism", complete except for 4 items, but this was lost in a fire about 1960. A few surviving items, and others contributed by hobbyists to help rebuild the collection, are rumoured to lie uncatalogued in cartons in the Fisher Library; a few items on the appended list (compiled with the help of American collectors) are

listed in Australian libraries, and some are in the Barr Collection, Turnbull Library, Wellington. I hope publication of the list will result in more of these little journals being located.

New Zealand 'a.j.' history should be easy to follow from now on, as AHP has an archive system for all items, in co-operation with the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. The main problems are the gradual change of emphasis from young people aiming at journalism towards a retirement hobby; and the scarcity and price of the equipment needed.

More on "Hobby Printing"

I give my definitions in the table below, and have found little difficulty applying them to existing items. Some hobbyists of the last century charged postage (or a small subscription fee), but this has been replaced by the bundle system financed by annual subscription, now used by 'a.j.' organisations. In neither case is the printing being sold. The booklet in which most of the material in this article originally appeared⁸ is clearly a private press edition, but the lists and several other pages have also appeared in serial form, in my hobby journal *Aspect Inquirer*, going free to 480 hobbyists — thus being a proper 'a.j.' item — both modes printed by the same person, on the same day, using the same type and press. Some definitions of private press cannot cope with such an everyday arrangement!

KINDS OF PRINTING ACTIVITY

("Kinds of Press" has caused endless confusion as the same equipment is often used by the same person for different purposes at different times)

Product	Motive
owner prints to customer's order	owner prints what he wants to
PRINTING TRADE normal range of commercial printing	PRIVATE PRESS usually literary, conservative, letterpress booklets for collectors (includes 'bibliographic' presses)
Sold	
BACK-YARDER undercuts the trade	SMALL PRESS usually radical, small magazines, offset or duplicated
COMMUNITY SERVICE most printers do considerable free work for good causes	HOBBY PRINTING solitary, or may join "amateur journalists" for exchanges, editing, criticism
Given away	

New Zealand lacks an account of the private presses which have operated here, occasionally with real distinction. I have avoided this complex field, and may possibly have overlooked odd items produced purely for fun or typography exercise.

Sources of Information

In *Koolinda* Leon Stone gives much detail of his collection, which lacked only four items and has since been lost in a fire. He seems to have suppressed mention of some activity: — I presumed him unaware of Kerkham, but find Alf was an AAPA member (also BAPA and UAPA) and complained of lack of recognition by the AAPA officers.

The Barr Collection, Turnbull Library, lacks most Australasian items which R.G. Barr once had, but is still useful through files of U.S. journals such as *Fossil* and *National Amateur*.

Farmer's *Private Presses and Australia*, 1972 (supplement 1976), mentions a few Wilmot and Stone publications, but does not seem aware of the 1893-1905 hive of activity.

Most help has come from private collectors in the U.S.A. — Joe Bradburn, Willametta Keffer and Vic Moitoret. Our membership of NAPA (founded 1876) has made co-operation, and this article, possible.

Philip Parr,
Titahi Bay,
New Zealand.

¹ H. Round, *Boys Herald*, July 1908.

² William Golder (Hutt Valley, N.Z.) printed at home over 200 pages of his own poetry, *Philosophy of Love* (1871); this was a great effort, but produced for sale and so not an a.j. item.

³ W. Coxhead, *Quarterly Review*, October 1910.

⁴ See note 1.

⁵ R.G. Barr, *Silver Fern* 5, 1930.

⁶ *Hobby Press Guide*, 1955, 1956.

⁷ *Koolinda* 1.

⁸ Phil Parr, *History of Hobby Printing in Australasia*, Aspect Press, Titahi Bay, New Zealand, 1980.

Australasian Hobby Journals (up to 1970)

Listed alphabetically; letterpress unless stated otherwise

Amateur Atom A. Kerkham, Tasmania, 1926.

Amateur Ink Reeve and Marris, Wellington, N.Z., 1930. 22 pages duplicated Journal of N.Z. Amateur Arts & Literary Association.

Amateur Journalism L. Stone, Sydney, 1925; 6-panel folder to AAPA recruits.

Argonautae O.P. Stone and F. Cousins, Melbourne, 1907

(*Arrows Vol. 3 No. 1, Hal Stone Edition*) Printed New York, 1904; helps explain Hal's loss of a.j. enthusiasm for several years.

At Sea Hal Stone, 1904. Probably printed Chas. Heins shop, New York, but claimed printed during two-year cruise and finished in Australia.

- Austral Amateur* Herbert Round, Melbourne, 1896–1906, 109 issues; last 5 by F. Cousins; from 1898 for AAPA.
- (*Austral American*) Hal Stone, 1904; supplement to USA *United Amateur*.
- Austral Boy* L. Stone, June 1921, Jan. 1922.
- Austral Gem* W. Coxhead, 1899; smallest (3.5" x 2").
- Australian Amateur* L. Stone, 6 issues, 1925–7 for AAPA.
- Australian Amateur Journalists' Directory* Coxhead, 1899.
- Australian Amateur Press Association* Hal Stone, 1926, Membership list and journals published.
- Same title Hal Stone, 1904, Melbourne Convention Card.
- Australian Hobbyist* Burnett, at least 8 issues to 1930.
- Australian Library of Amateur Journalism* Leon Stone, 'wanted' list for his collection, about 1942.
- Australian Magazine* Cliff Howe, several spirit duplicated, then 2 issues 1926 on home-made press.
- Australian Youth* J. Jordan and C. McAuley, Sydney, at least one issue, 1896.
- Barrier Load* anon, 2 issues before 1930.
- Blue & Yellow* E. Grayland, Hastings, N.Z., weekly magazine, letterpress and rubber stamp, over 300 pages by a schoolboy, 1931–3.
- Brochure* M. Gerber, U.S. amateur stationed in Queensland, 6 issues, 1943–5, some distributed locally by L. Stone, mimeo.
- Budding Scribe* E.A. Laery (and Rundle ?), Auckland, N.Z., spirit duplicated, 3 issues, 1897.
- Bunyip* W. Gowan and A. Wenholm, 2 issues, Sydney, 1904.
- Chips* Cliff Howe, 10 issues, No. 3 to 12, 1926–8.
- Churinga* J. Guinane, 21 issues, 1943–55, duplicated in several colours, booklets with justified lines.
- Comrades* J. Fullerton and A. McCarthy, N.Z., about 1904.
- Coo-ee* Hal Stone, 3 issues, 1948–52.
- Corio* N. Watson, 2 issues, spirit duplicated, 1904.
- Corresponding Journal* J. Jordan (and Hill ?), Sydney, 6 or 7 issues, 1896.
- Courier* A. Dickson, Melbourne, 12 issues, 1895.
- Daisy* Kate Stone (Mrs Hal, also 'Sydney Partridge'), 1907, printed by Hal.
- Down Under* J. Fraser, N.Z., for BPS and NAPA, 1961.
- Emu* A. Smith, A. Jones, W. Gilmour, 7 issues, 1894.
- First Strawberry* E. Grayland, Auckland, N.Z., children's story by wife Valerie, 1946.
- Frayed Frisket* John Holmes, N.Z., for BPS; 2 issues, Hamilton, 1968, 2 Chatham Islands, 1969.
- Gas* A. Kerkham, Tasmania, duplicated, 1926.
- Gunyah Try-us* Queenie Halloran, 1911.
- Hobbies & Pastimes* A. Dickson, 3 issues, 1895.
- I H.* Malm, 2 issues.
- Ink Pot* L. Brodsky, 1897 and 1901.
- Kangaroo* Coxhead and Jordan, 11 MS, 1892–3, printed 15 (or 16) from 1893–5; official journal of AAJA.
- Kiwi* R. Evans, Christchurch, N.Z., 1926.

- Kiwi News* R. Dixon, N.Z., 1930, official journal of Kiwi Correspondence Club, duplicated, 12 pages.
- Koolinda* Leon Stone, 9 issues, 1943-5, confusingly up to No. 10; full sets available in several Australian libraries, and main a.j. collections; gives detail of ALAJ.
- Kooraka* L. Stone, 13 issues, 1923-9.
- Livewire* R. Evans, N.Z., spirit duplicated, 1925.
- Microbe* A. Dickson, F. and A. Wilmot, 8 issues, 1901-2; F. Wilmot published many other items, but for sale.
- Mishap* J. Guinane, duplicated, 1942.
- Moon* L. Stone, 4 issues, 1923-4; AAPA newsletter.
- News-Zine* J. Guinane, duplicated or MS?; 10 issues to 1941.
- Nulla Nulla* F. Conway, Sydney, 1904.
- Odd Magazine* L. Stone, 6 issues, 1915-20; started when Leon was 8 — all printed by Hal.
- Old Time Flicks* Helen Winter, Auckland, N.Z., 1955 for Queensland Amateur Writers' Association, duplicated. Helen Winter has several hundred items to various groups, especially BAPA.
- Pantheist* P. Dwyer, 1927; (Hal Stone print?).
- Platypus* spirit duplicated journal of Tasmanian branch of AAPA; 14 issues, 1904.
- Private Presses* E. Grayland, 1947; general outline plus review of N.Z. examples; 32 pages printed by hand platen.
- Red Ant* Hal Stone, 1912.
- R.K.* J. Guinane, 1951; duplicated, justified lines, hard-cover book.
- Silver Fern* R. Barr, Christchurch, N.Z., 5 issues, 1929-30.
- Silver Wattle* Hal Stone, 2 issues, 1925-6.
- Smallprint from Down Under* R. Geeves, Tasmania, 5 issues to Am.APA, 1968-9.
- Snapshot* R. Barr, N.Z., duplicated, 1923.
- Southern Cross Journal* F. Burnett, 6 issues, 1928.
- Spindrift* A. Reeve and P. Thornton, Wellington, N.Z., 1929.
- Tasma Amateuriter* R. Padman, Tasmania, 12 issues, 1904.
- Three Circles* J. Miller (US Army); printed in Australia about 1944, some distributed locally.
- Unwanted* G. Wakely, N.Z., for BPS, 1965; rejected as 'filth' (a thoughtful essay on abortion).
- Victorian* (later *Ye Kangaroo*) Round, Stone, Cousins, 1894-1905; various issues stated (about 50, see text).
- Waratah* W. Coxhead, 3 issues on postcards, 1895-9.
- Wayfellow* Hal and Kate Stone, 3 issues, 1915-21, fourth in 1943.
- Wayside Goose* Stone, Ford, Brennan, Cousins ("The Waysiders"), 10 issues, 1905-6.
- World* A. Dickson, 14 issues, 1897-1901.
- Yankee Kangaroo* L. Stone with B. Smith of America, 2 issues, duplicated, 1943-4 (both in services).
- Young Litterateur* Jordan and Peek, Sydney, 14 issues from 1898; one was largest from Australia (12" x 9").

Youth's Own C. Howe, 2 issues, 1929.

This list omits the numerous efforts of school, church and scout groups, and all private publications known to have been for sale. Among these were S. Smith, *Kat* and *Australian Kat*; F. Wilmo^t, *Birth* and *Pickwick Portfolio*; and C. Howe, *Midgit* and *Silent Salesman*.

Manuscript Journals — pass-arounds

Only one issue (*Boomerang*, Keffer Collection) has been located; dates and spelling are a compromise in several cases, and mostly there is no information as to whether hand-written or typed.

Helen Boyle *Blodofino*, 1930.

Matilda, Tom, Rosa Cameron *Marroon Magazine*, 1866-8.

William Chambers (N.Z.) *Lyre*, 1930.

Una Cleland *Ha! Ha! Magazine for Kids*, 1908.

Will Coxhead *Kangaroo*, *Wallaby*, *Southern Cross*, *Offical Register*, all 1890s.

Ada Dover *Laughing Jack*, 1924.

Cecil Doyle Baralgah, 1904.

Patric Dwyer Muse, 1926.

Joan Eales *Buddies*, 1926.

Albert Easdale *Globe Notes*, 1925.

H. Francois *Le Petit Corporal*, 1904.

Les Gabriel *Black Cat*, *Outward Bound*, *Official Newsletter*, 1924-6.

E. Gilmour *Dingo*, 1902; *Maxim*, *Gorky*, 1904.

W.J. Gilmour *Austral Star*, 1892-9; *Dingo*, 1895.

E. Grayland *Ormandville News* (N.Z.), 1930.

J. Guinane 6 *Waratah*, 2 *Ten Points*, 1920s.

V. Hayden *Southern Cross*, 1926.

Cliff Howe *Sparrow*, 1925.

J. Jordan *Club Record*, 1894.

Reg and Dorothy Kerr *Amateur's Effort*, *Koala*, 1920s.

Gerald Lewis *Observer*, 1905.

Norman Lindsay 12 *Boomerang*, 1895.

E. Little *Ye Anciente Recorde*, *Lone Westralian*, 1925.

Lucy and Joyce McNicholl *Wandilite*, 1923.

McNicholl 12 *Kangaroo Lux*, to 1899.

Isabella Mosely and Kate Partridge *Coo-ee*, 1905.

A. Schiller *Amateur Journalist*, *Typetaps*, 1925.

E. Smith *Amateur Times*, 1926.

May Smith and Minard Crommalin *Wombat*, 1905.

Alma Southwell *Morning Star*, 1924.

Leon Stone *Boomerang*, 1924; *Enthusiast*, 1925.

Doris Thompson *Calliope*, 1926.

Annie Tomamichel *Maggie*, 1903.

William Tombs *Golden Gate*, 1926.

O. Urquart *Sandgraper*, 1925.

Mary Ware *Jester*, 1930.

Frank and Ada Wilmot *Iago*, 1898.

Note: Hal Stone's last *Coo-ee* (1952) had the same title as Kate's 1905 MS through which they met.

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